1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

away. It seemed dangerous even to notice the strip of white cotton which showed high above the falls, though the stick from which it hung we could not see.

"Human beings do not go there," Bayo had said warningly. "Human eyes must also not go there."

But the shrine at the Mamadam is a friendly place. There a man finds a moment's ease. For a brief interval, at least, the voyager upstream or down rests there to get his breath, as he makes ready for a new start. Directly below the falls is a stretch of still water, which follows upon the wearisome portage at the Musumba Prati and the struggle with the rapids just above it, while, when continuing up river, the boatmen face a succession of rapids before another stretch of quiet water is reached. It is not strange, therefore, that no man, whatever his need to make time, will fail to stop at the Mamadam long enough to make known to the Mother of the River his errand and to ask for the continuance of her protection.

This shrine is the home of the Great Mother of the inland waters, she who, above all else, had secured to the ancestors of these Bush Negroes their freedom from slavery. In the city and on the plantations of the coastal region the Negroes, under states of possession by the water gods, sing of their longing to join those at the Mamadam.

Let me die on the river, O!
Let me die on the water, O!
All the Ingi spirits
Are at the Mamadam,
Let me die on the river, O!

Deep in the interior, if one of the elders, let us say a man of the Dahomey clan, is alarmed at the prospect of the white man penetrating their bush, some man can be looked to, then, to say reassuringly, "Have no fear. They will not come beyond the Mamadam!"

For this river is their own. "Once, long, long ago," the legend was told us, "this river was but a creek. There were no great trees here, no rocks. There were no boats, no

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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173 clearings, no villages. Our ancestors came and made of this creek a great river. They cleared the forest and built villages. They brought their gods from Africa with them, and the gods made the trees grow, and the gods made the clayey banks so that our old women might make the black obia pots. Once, long, long ago, two boats came up, each carrying six men. These were our ancestors. It is they who made this bush. It is they who made the river from a small creek."

Here the legend ended. The glow in the speaker's eyes was gone, and the intent expression of the dark face. When we questioned further, it was as though we spoke to a wooden mask, brown, passive.

"And women?" we asked at last, hoping that the spirits might permit the speaker to tell us half of what he knew of his female ancestors. "Did no women come? How did your ancestors get women to bear for them sons and daughters to people the bush?"

"The women, Bak'a, God gave them!"

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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But Sedefo, splendid actor that he was, betrayed in no way that he was aware of his friend's discomfiture, except that his interpolations became more and more spirited, balancing in the intensity of his voice the formality of the Granman's speech.

"True, true!" he said, with excitement.

"By Ando, G'ama'!"

When the tale was finished, the Granman became reminiscent. In his youth he had been like the rest. What did it mean to be a man and not to assert one's manhood when a handsome woman was to be had? He was on the Marowyne then. Did they want to beat him? He had said, "Very well." As many as wished could come at him—but one at a time.

As he spoke now, he clenched his fist and struck the table with it so that the table shook and the guns which lay underneath it rattled.

He was no longer young, but his answer to people who threatened would still be the same, he continued.

"Tell them that everywhere on the river, mati," he finished with a smile, and he cleared his throat as a signal for the bassia to come and pour out drinks for his visitors, before they left his village.

And how was their clan head who had been ailing? he asked, with friendly solicitude.

5

Granman Yankuso was telling about his great ancestors. He looked particularly well that night. His smock-like coat was a deep blue, and over it was a print of orange and black worn toga fashion.

There was Bagida, one of the first to escape to the bush, and Dosi who made the Kasito clan, and Ajako who was a Matchau Negro, a man of the Granman's own clan, and it was he who had fought against the whites and had freed his people. There were Mother Bedu, and Mother Fakia, and the great Abïni family which bore Alabi, whom the peccary had helped to freedom, so that Alabi's people, the Awana Negroes, to this day did not eat pingo.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

● 173 Alabi, as the Granman called him, was the Araby of history, the great rebel of whom Stedman, who campaigned against the Bush Negroes long ago, wrote.

"White man, Alabi did not know how to work gold, or to earn great wealth, but he had stories in his head." He had called the first black krutu. And from Alabi had come Danieh who built Gansee, which was even now one of the most populous villages on the whole river.

"Long ago in the bush here, we had men, Bak'a!"

There was G'ama' Okosu, a Nomerimi Negro, the leader of those men who had escaped to the swamps on the coast, instead of going into the bush, and whom the people were afraid to touch.

"G'ama' Okosu could change into a kwatta monkey when he liked. He could cross the river without a boat."

The Dombi Negroes had their man, too. He was Sabaku. He was leaving his people to run away from slavery. He was going into the bush. "If we do not meet again in life, we shall meet in death," he said. He had no boat in which to cross the river, so he went to Yank'o, the buzzard, and he asked him to carry him. "I have no home, O Yank'o," he said to the buzzard, "but I will get on your back, and there my home will be. You who fly high, who fly over water, and over the high bush, carry me to safety."

The Granman himself was part Dombi and part Matchau, he said.

[825] "That is why we do not shoot a buzzard. If we shoot him by accident, then we must say 'Many thanks.' "

There was Tata Wadia who opened up this bush, who was still sung about by the Negroes of the city when they invoked the Kromanti spirit.

"I have the stick which he used."

"Will you let us see it, Granman?"

"Gbolo!"

[126] "We will photograph you holding the stick, Granman, and when we show it in our country we will tell the story."

He nodded. But the photograph was never taken.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

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The next night he told stories again. The talk was of Africa. 173

"Our first ancestor was Tata Sakotu. He came from God." Father Sakotu found himself alone in the bush. Day after day he wandered, and hunger was killing him. One day he came to a tree bearing the pongi fruit, but the fruit hung so high that he could not get it. Father Sakotu cried out to God, and said, "O God, you gave me life. Give me food that I may sustain the life you gave me." God came to him and said, he said, "Sakotu, break off a stick, and with the stick strike the branches of the tree, and the fruit will fall down." All that he knew Sakotu learned from God, and he passed it on to his children.

The Granman's story of wandering alone in the bush brought another to his mind.

"Did you ever hear about Captain Apatu?" he asked us. "He lived not so long ago. He was a man without fear. The French sent him to Pali (Paris) and wrote down in their white man's books that he was a great man. I will tell you his story."

Apatu was a Matchau Negro, a member of the Granman's own clan. He swore friendship with the Aluku people and went over to the French nationality and later tried to get the Granman's people to become French. This was how it came to pass.

"Apatu was a clever man. We say knowledge is not wisi, to want to know is not sorcery. But sometimes, when a man knows much, he has enemies, and trouble comes to him. This happened to Apatu. People on the river said he was a *wisiman*. He said to the people, when they drove him away and cursed him, he said, 'Give me one fig banana, and I will go. If I am guilty of witchcraft, let the whites catch me, and kill me.' He wore one obia on his arm which Tata Boni gave him. Tata Boni was a great obia man. He could walk on the water."

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

With this obia, and unafraid, Apatu went. He reached the French shore, and found work. Years later he was asked to guide an expedition against the Indians. They came to a cave. At the other end of it Indians waited with their poisoned arrows.

The French officer said to him, "Apatu, are you afraid?"

"I will go, I am not afraid of death," Apatu said to the officer.

He led the way through the cave, calling out, "Mafi, Yanku na'a, hi!"

Three times the Indians tried to shoot him, and each time they failed.

"The French officer gave Apatu a gold piece for saving his life. That was when they sent him to Pali, and it was written down that he was a great man," ended the Granman.

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"Do you know what they asked me in the city when I was there?" the Granman said one day, when his elders assembled. "'Chief Yankuso,' they asked me, 'which is better, light or darkness?' I said to them, I said, 'Darkness is better. When it is day we work and we struggle. At night we go into our hammocks with our women, and we find peace.'"

He turned to us as he told the story.

"Is it not so, white man? You yourself are young."

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A few days after the gods had spoken, the Granman asked us if we would that evening show the pictures of the country of the Negroes which we had brought. We had shown him earlier the simple projector, actually a flashlight with a lens attached, through which a roll of film passed to flash images, one by one, on a screen. On the film were photographs of illustrations from books on Africa.

Mechanical objects of all kinds fascinated these men of the bush, and they would ask again and again to see our flashlights or the inside of our phonograph. Though un-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

538 The Djukas possess, in common with many other primitive tribes, a number of trickster stories. They are called *anansi-stories*, and are usually concerned with the adventures of a clever spider, who outwits all the other animals. They resemble closely the Br'er Rabbit tales of the Negro of the [171] southern United States. These are West African themes, and can be found not only in the Carolinas and in Surinam, but scattered also throughout the West Indies. In the middle of the last century a collection of these stories was made among the Town Negroes of Paramaribo.

● 173 As most primitives possess no writing materials or technique, their knowledge is necessarily passed on by word of mouth, which imposes a severe limitation upon its possible extent. History, for the Djukas, starts with the rebellion, and of what came before they know little and care less. If they have stories of the Creation, we did not hear them. One approach to written language is in the Aucaner nation, where 212 a few rudimentary symbols are carved on paddles or other implements, a form of symbol-writing (see Appendix B). [45] The implement is given to someone as a token of affection, the symbols constituting a greeting. Some of them may be seen in the illustrations of small paddles and pot-stirrers.

202 For communicating over a long distance, the Djukas use [177] a system of drum telegraphy. This they have brought over from their West African homeland. At the town of Biodoti the news of our expedition was sent upriver by being drummed out on a tomtom. Squatting over the reverberating *apenti*, the Djuka buck rapped out the peculiar rhythm that

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by the effect of medical care, we shall take 1 January 1950 as the date of reference for the calculations of mortality among the Boni.

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II. — Demography of the Boni

Census. — Estimation of Age.

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Method used. The demographic study of the Boni presents the difficulties inherent in all populations without civil records:

1. Difficulty of determining the ages of individuals;
2. Difficulty of determining for each woman the deceased children in relation to the surviving ones.

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We attempted to establish a local chronology by linking the ages of individuals to events of known date that had stuck in their minds.

More particularly we fixed the ages of the old men from the voyage of the explorer Crevaux (1877) and from the death of the grand man Anato (1891), the ages of middle-aged persons from events which occurred between 1915 and 1924, death of the grand man Ochi (1915), end of World War I (1918), hydroplane accident at the mouth of the Inini (1921), installation of a rose-wood factory (1925).

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The persons born after 1930 were placed without difficulty, for we knew a certain number of them as children or adolescents in 1948.

Starting with a certain number of men whose age could be fixed with considerable accuracy, all the others, men and women, were placed by comparison. In fact, if the Boni do not know their age, they are able to say that they are, for example, two or three years younger than so-and-so (6).

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6. Their attention is brought to bear on these age differences because, if a group isolated in the bush is led to address a prayer to the ancestors for the curing of a sick person, this prayer has to be pronounced by the oldest person.

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161 Thus during the period 1895 to 1925, the Boni population
[128] doubled with each generation. These results are confirmed by
●(173) the study of the genealogies. The present-day Boni, with the
[613] exception of about 5% of them who belong to recently founded lineages, are descended by known filiation from seven women who lived at the end of the eighteenth century.

It is possible that before the period to which this inquiry refers epidemics were produced and struck certain villages in particular, destroying entire lineages. In fact we cannot say anything certain about the evolution of the population before 1890. Let us only remember that this rate of reproduction of 200% per generation of 31 years represents the normal rate for the Refugee Blacks, in the absence of large epidemics and of venereal diseases and before any medical aid.

During the period 1925-1942, the Boni population did not vary (rate of reproduction $\frac{105}{100}$).

Since 1940, it has been increasing slightly, by 25% per 27 years, that is just under 1% per year.

163 Birth rate and mortality rate. Demographic balance. From 1
165 January 1956 to 31 December 1957, i.e., in two years, 39 children were born in the villages on the French bank (660 persons); and 21 persons died (including 5 children born during this period).

Rate of birth: 2.9% per year.

Rate of mortality: 1.6% per year.

161 Rate of increase: 1.3% per year.

The rate of increase of 1.3%, which corresponds incidentally to the theoretical calculation indicated above, is very much below that of the population of Cayenne and of the communes of
[164] the coast. If one considers that before 1920 it reached the remarkable value of 3% per year, one realizes the extent of the disaster brought about by venereal diseases.

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621 The principle behind the constitution of the Boni villages
613 is, as we have said, the localization of the matrilineage. Men
[591] and women live in the village of their maternal kin; the wife does not leave her village to join her husband, who comes to visit her from time to time without ceasing, himself, to live in the midst of his own lineage.

The composition of each village thus corresponds, at least in principle, to the group of living people on the genealogical table. But a certain number of exceptions are observed:

[167] -A certain number of men (about 20 out of 800 persons) have emigrated for good and can no longer be counted in the population of the villages;

[619] -On the other hand, a dozen Djuka and Saramaka married
[591] to Boni women have settled permanently in the villages and have been included in the census.

125 We have tried to estimate with as much precision as possible
128 the age of the people concerned, by means of events of known
[173] date which they remember, from the trip of the explorer Crevaux (1878) to the war 1939-45. We have established a local chronology, reproduced as an appendix at the end of the present chapter.

125 The demographic survey, which has been the subject of another publication (1), was conducted parallel with the sociological

[113] 1. "Etude démographique comparée des Noirs Réfugiés Boni et des Indiens Oayana du Haut-Maroni /Comparative Demographic Study of the Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana Indians of the Upper Maroni/," in Population, éditions de l'INED, 1959, No. 3. 2/A

investigation.

2/A [See S. Hurault, This file-- Analyst.]

/42 cont./

601 128 So-and-so, and So-and-so, can be regarded as sure. On the other hand, we have considered that there was a break in the genealogy when, going back in time, we arrived at this single datum: Ma X... was the sister of Ma Y..., for it could be a question of kinship in the classificatory sense.

No form of birthright existing among the Boni, there is some uncertainty about the order of birth of brothers and sisters for persons long dead. We have adopted the order kept by oral tradition without trying to rectify it.

613 814 829 In many African populations a special tradition is connected with perpetuating the memory of the founder, at least his name, the place of his grave. With the present-day Boni absolutely nothing like this is found; they are not concerned in any way with the true foundress of their lineage; no memory, no legend, not even a name has come down to them. It even seems as though these distant ancestors interest them little because they are less able to act in behalf of their present-day descendants. Indeed, with each new generation the memory of an ancient one dies out.

173 [126] On our first trip in 1948 we called attention, unfortunately without noting them down precisely, to /43/ very interesting oral traditions going back to the time of slavery, especially the names of the slave-owners who showed themselves to be the most cruel. In [814] 1952 the last old man who knew them had died; the very memory of what he had said was already effaced.

829 602 As a matter of fact, Boni thought, strictly practical and utilitarian, is concerned principally with keeping the memory of the part of the genealogy indispensable to the living to know their kinship ties. Memory of women whose posterity has died out and of men who did nothing remarkable is dead from the second generation on.

114 613 Since none of the travelers of the 19th century understood the importance of taking genealogies, it is probable that the names

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There are no gardens around the cabins because the conditions of the soil and climate render permanent cultivation impracticable. The nearest thing is a few persons planting some banana trees around the hut at the foot of which they spread the hearth ashes. As a general rule villages are closely hemmed in by secondary brushwood, and people plant far from one another and sometimes very far from the village.

If it does not admit the appropriation of land to individuals, custom does admit, on the other hand, the ownership of trees. In the villages the useful trees (coconut trees, maripa palms /attalea excelsa/, mango trees, cashew-apple trees, etc.) all have owners. The tree is considered as personal property and is transmitted by inheritance in the same way as a gun or a canoe. The procedure employed by the Boni for the dispersion of the inheritance among the members of the lineage of the dead man sometimes has the effect of transmitting the ownership of a tree to a person who is not of the village. For example, in Boniville where a fraction of the Kotika lineage lives, two caumou palms were bequeathed a long time ago to members of the lineage living in Kotika, who come each year to gather the fruit.

Appendix

Local Chronology Used for Determining Ages

1876	Death of Grand Man Atyaba.
1877	Trip of the explorer Crevaux from the Maroni to the Yari and the Amazon, in the company of Apatu, head of the Boni village.
1882	Apatu secedes, taking with him about 150 persons and founds the village which bears his name on the lower course of the Maroni.

/60 cont./

• 173 1891 (1) Death of Grand Man Anato.

1. The trips of the explorer Coudreau, who stayed in the Upper Maroni in 1888 and 1891, have left no memory behind.

1902 Discovery of the gold of the Inini.
1908 Death of Apatu.
1915 Death of Grand Man Ochi.
1915 (April) Death of the explorer Jean Laveau at the Grand Soula falls on the Litani.
1917 (Nov.) Nomination of Grand Man Awensay.
1918 (2) End of the "war against William." (2)

2. This date left a very precise memory, for it marked the end of a period of great misery.

1921 Creation of the short-lived "Compagnie des Transports Aériens Guyanais" /Guianan Air Transport Company/; hydroplane accident at the mouth of the Inini.

[313] 1925-26 A rosewood factory is established first in the Boni village of Kotika, then at the mouth of Coulé-Coulé Creek on the Litani.

1931 Monteux-Richard mission.
1936 Death of Grand Man Awensay.

6:Hurault--85 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8 Boni

/61/

173 1937 Mission to determine the trijunction point of the frontiers of French Guiana-Brazil-Surinam.

1939 Declaration of war.

1944-45 Not a precise point of reference. The Boni confuse the liberation of the territory with the end of the war.

1948 First I.G.N. mission.

1949 Mr. Aubert de la Füe's mission; second I.G.N. mission.

1952 Third I.G.N. mission. /blank page/ /63/

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

571 The social institutions of the Refugee Blacks diverge noticeably from those of the African peoples from whom they issued. [561] They do not include age grades, men's societies, or initiation; [515] marriage involves neither a contract between kin groups nor [881] "dowry."

[583] In a general way these societies founded by rebel slaves who had retained an extreme horror of all oppression were organized 571 so as not to have any material constraint weigh upon the individual. 626 Their institutions are entirely founded on the idea of protection [791] against suprahuman perils; the individual remains perfectly free, and he adheres /to these institutions/ only in proportion as he is [156] conscious of these perils. The custom of the Refugee Blacks, devoid of any means of material coercion, tends to develop within the individual the feeling that he is constantly threatened.

/70 cont./

159 In March, 1957, Awéni, head of the Afi lineage, established
522 in Asisi, was concerned about regrouping the members of his
613 lineage and especially bringing back to Asisi Magdaléna (c20), a
[591] woman of about 45 years who had settled in Kormotibo near her husband L... (†1955), with her children and others whom she had raised. He went to Kormotibo and pointed out to her that since her husband was dead, she no longer had any reason to stay there and that she should come back to Asisi. Magdaléna insulted him in front of the inhabitants of the village, proclaimed that she had no orders to receive from anybody; then when he insisted, she armed herself with a stick and chased him across the village as far as the landing place. He had to re-embark precipitately to the laughter of the Kormotibo people.

Political and Legal Powers

643 The grand man. The head of the Dikan lo fills the office of grand
613 man of the Boni. The present grand man, Difu, was about 67 years old in 1958.

[193] Oral tradition has kept the names of his seven predecessors:

Gongo (Dikan lo)	1810-1840	dates noted according to Coudreau
Labi (Adam?) (Dikan lo)	1840-1870	
Atyaba (Kotika lo)	1870-1876	
Anato (Kotika lo)	1876-1891	
Ochi (Dikan lo)	1891-1915	
Awensay id.	1917-1936	
Difu id.	since 1937.	

[195] According to information collected by Coudreau in 1887, Gongo was the successor to Agosu, himself successor to Boni. Upon the death of Labi, there were only women and children in the Dikan lo. The office of grand man then passed to the Kotika lo with Atyaba and Anato. It then came back to the Dikan lo with Ochi.

/70 cont./

643 613 In 1957 the Dikan lineage was practically extinct. There remained only Grand Man Difu and his elder brother Samalobi, very old.

[829] The present grand man does not know the genealogy of his lineage beyond his grandmother. /Fig. 14 appears here./ /71/

[648] At the death of Awensay it was Samalobi, eldest of Awensay's classificatory nephews, who was to be named; but the French administration thought they had to oppose it, judging him too old; he yielded with good grace.

613 [165] [554] Samalobi, the ancestor, the patriarch of the Boni, died in May, 1957 at over 100 years old. Although very weakened by his infirmities and nearly blind, he kept great prestige and no important decision was made without his consent.

• 173 The son of Apatu, companion of Crevaux, he had retained an exact memory of the explorer whom he had accompanied during part of his trip in 1877. It is thanks to his memories that Crevaux's prestige has remained so great on the Maroni.

643 692 578 The grand man judges without appeal disputes between members of different lineages. Truly serious affairs are extremely rare, if one keeps in mind that:

[613] [583] [584] --Disputes over the payment of dowry, paying it back in case of divorce, and the assignment of the children, which form the main part of the cases argued before ordinary African jurisdictions, do not exist among the Refugee Blacks;

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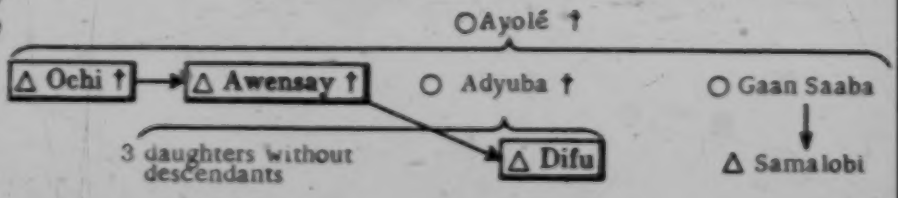

Fig. 14. Filiation of the last three grand men of the Boni.

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What constitutes the religion of the Refugee Blacks is a synthesis of elements originating with various peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti, Agni, Mina, and Fon and also Congolese elements. This synthesis seems to have been born among the Saramaka, the first tribe formed at the beginning of the 18th century, and to have been adopted thereafter with modifications of detail by the Djuka, tribe created about 1760. The Boni, the last tribe formed, probably received these beliefs during the time of slavery which they spent under the tutelage of the Djuka, from 1815 to 1860. The beliefs of the Boni and those of the Djuka have an identical base; the rites and their effects on social life are exactly the same. Nevertheless, the Djuka, almost ten times more numerous, have been able to keep very differentiated conceptions and specialized cults, involving priests in the literal sense of the term.

The Boni have kept only the essentials, and many conceptions, especially the myths which serve as support for the whole tradition, are very much blurred among them.

The Boni like to imagine that Africans constitute only one nation, and that they have inherited in a lump the traditions and social forms of this nation. They know now (especially from having seen a good deal of the Senegalese riflemen of the 1937 French mission) that numerous tribes exist, but that has not shaken the veneration they have for Africa, source, for them, of all knowledge and all strength. However, almost nothing of the culture peculiar to each one of the great tribes has reached them; no name of an African nation has remained in their memory, and /192/ none of the languages of their land of origin has been kept (1); everywhere the vehicular language

1. One observes, however, that a certain number of disconnected details of African life have come down to them by oral tradition;

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[173] /192 cont./ thus it is that they have kept a rather exact description of the elephant (leu) and the gorilla (malẽgwana).

[648] imposed on the slaves has prevailed. There is nothing surprising about that, since the slaveholders tried, in order to prevent revolts, to mix to the maximum the Blacks of the various tribes.

174 A certain number of men initiated in differing degrees
177 into African cults were among the rebels. They tried to conserve and transmit these rites, which their descendants have more or less transposed or deformed (2). As far as one can

[182] 2. The single fact that the vegetation and fauna differed totally from those of Africa immediately required a modification of ritual which called for infusions of leaves of numerous plants to which definite magical properties are attributed.

[198] As far as one can judge by the secret languages attached to these cults, in which are recognized many words deformed from the ordinary language, and a few Indian words, these cults in their present state must
[178] differ appreciably from the ones which gave them birth. In fact, the only thing the Refugee Blacks have authentically kept is concepts, metaphysical and moral ideas.

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/208 cont./

787 789 the Forestry Society of Saint-Laurent, told us of seeing in 1937 among the Paramaka a possessed man take firmly in his hands a red-hot axe-head and keep it between his two hands for an appreciable length of time.

Personally we have several times seen possessed people thrash themselves with spiny awara branches and break bottles on their heads with such violence that the pieces flew several meters;; some of them were hurt, but others presented an intact epidermis.

There is no special instruction for the exercises of invulnerability. The possessed person does what he feels capable of, strikes himself progressively harder and harder, breaks bottles, etc.

It is affirmed that certain possessed people are capable of climbing the thorny awara palm trees. If the gita then abandons them, they can no longer come down. Those who know the Kumenti /sic/ language well then evoke the god by formulas so that he will come back.

787 578 [173] Theoretically, if someone wrongs a man who has a Kumẽnti, his gita "rises" immediately. The guilty one can do no more than flee. They say that in the old days possessed people were seen /209/ to kill those who had done them wrong. No kunu can result from this if the victim is in the wrong. Nothing like this has been seen for a very long time.

The principle is that if one has nothing to reproach himself about with respect to the possessed person, one has nothing to fear from him. This is why people do not hesitate to interpose themselves between the possessed one and the object of his wrath.

[789] If two men having a Kumẽnti get into an argument, their gita "rise" simultaneously and they strike each other with machete blows without, it is said, any harm resulting to either one, until someone separates them.

/242 cont./

754 Of course he was recognized as a wisimã by the first
764 adjuration made to his body carried in the papay on the heads
787 of two men: "If thou art a wisi man, do not come toward us." The dead man drew back. /2../

[784] /243/ Continuation of the interrogation showed that he had not yet killed anybody, but that he had been killed by Odun when he was preparing to kill someone of his lineage.

754 The persecutors of Agyémési, contrary to their hope, did not recover after his death from the maladies which they were attributing to his sorcery; that did not shake their conviction in
755 the least. They left for Paramaribo to have themselves treated
648 by a Creole magician (for the Surinam Creoles, who practice white magic and black magic indiscriminately, are by this fact reputed to be more expert than the Refugee Blacks in combating the effects of wisi).

754 In recounting this story to us, the grand man told us that it is always necessary to be cautious with accusations of wisi,
[762] because one can never be sure. A man unjustly accused can
[784] commit suicide and pursue his accusers with his kunu (most of the Boni state that they would do so in such a case). In former
173 times, the barbarous punishments in use in Africa were applied
683 to revealed wisimã: they were burned alive. But people tell
784 that one of them, some months afterward, undertook against his accusers' lineage a kunu which still lasts today. He had been
[178] wrongly condemned! It is through fear of the kunu more than through care for humanity, that these punishments have been abolished.

754 It certainly seems that the constant fear of the wisimã in
[152] which the Boni live is only a collective hallucination, and that rare indeed are those who dare to indulge in practices which might draw upon them such terrible social and religious sanctions. As for these practices themselves, they appear to be without any real content, and the misfortunes attributed to them are

/249 cont./

751 [787] Possession by a Kumẽnti gives, they say, invulnerability during the time of the trance, but in his ordinary state the individual remains vulnerable (they say only that in case of danger the gita "rises" immediately).

Someone who has a man nẽŋga ɔbia has no trances of possession, but they state that he is permanently invulnerable (except for breaking of the kina). In order to obtain this ɔbia one must have himself "washed" for a very long time by an elder who knows the leaves in question. He delivers them already crushed so that no one may be able to know this secret outside of the son or nephew to whom he bequeaths it.

It is necessary to continue to be washed four times a year for 15 days each time, to keep up the force of the ɔbia.

[515] During these 15 days one bathes three times a day, in secret (in principle nobody knows that you have this ɔbia).

[834] During these periods one must have no relation with a woman, even to talk to her.

They state that someone who has a man nẽŋge ɔbia can be struck by blows of a machete and even receive a gunshot with impunity.

[173] They believe that this ɔbia, in the past called man feti ɔbia, was obtained by the ancestors at the time of the wars against the whites; still today it inspires an unshakeable confidence. /250/ In October, 1952 we saw M..., a man of 45 [164] [752] with great good sense, make a deep gash in his leg while cutting a liana, in spite of his ɔbia. Doubt did not cross his mind for a second: he told us that certainly he had unknowingly eaten something contrary to the kina of the ɔbia. Since we were working near some villages, he went immediately to find the master of the remedy to have the power restored. For nothing in the world would he have left for a long round of work in the bush with the feeling that he was at the mercy of an accident.

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648 So relations between the Europeans and Refugee Blacks have nothing in common with what one observes in Africa: one notes their faults without indulgence, but one admires them for their strong personality, their art, and their techniques, and one bears an esteem for them which is not feigned.

829 The Refugee Blacks feel neither hate nor jealousy toward Europeans. This /297/ may surprise one at first, for they have had to put up with cruel wars fought against them, which have left a precise memory with them; but the explanation is simple: the Boni have no hate because their life is happy, and they have no jealousy because they do not try to imitate the Europeans and are satisfied with their own civilization.

• 173 186 On this subject it will be noted that the Refugee Blacks recall the time of slavery without shame and without any inferiority complex; this is simply because they do not have the feeling of being the descendants of slaves; they feel themselves to be the descendants of warriors who imposed their independence by force of arms; the Djuka, exaggerating to themselves the scope of the successes won by their ancestors, even have a certain superiority complex. Proud of their ancestors, the Refugee Blacks do not feel in any way inferior to the white man and behave toward him as equal to equal.

648 084 The Boni, like the Djuka and the Saramaka in Surinam, live under a de facto regime which is equivalent to internal autonomy. This regime was instituted for the Boni from their first contact with the French administration in 1861; it has always been associated with perfect loyalty.

The French administration, which until recent times did not have any permanent establishments in the interior of the country, has never tried to interfere with the interior functioning of the tribes which went on and still goes on according to their own law. The Refugee Blacks have thus been spared that hybrid jurisdiction, applying a customary law altered by European ideas,